

## Champion in chains



### Lifting the lid on unlikely hero Harry Vardon's tragedies and triumphs

Harry Vardon – The Revealing Story of A Champion Golfer – by Audrey Howell, is the intimate and touching biography of a great golfing champion – the greatest player to ever grace a course and a man idolised on both sides of the Atlantic as the King of Golf.

Revealed for the first time are details of Harry's private life – including the hitherto unknown fact that he fathered a son – the result of a love affair he never made public. This son, Peter Howell, is married to the author.

Harry Vardon rose to fame with a golf swing that brought him six Open titles. Even now, fifty years after his death, that record has never been surpassed.

Yet he was an unlikely hero. Born in 1870, Vardon had stood in hand-me-downs and bare feet studying his "betters" at the Royal Jersey Golf Club, and mentally perfecting his own game. It was he who adopted the controversial "overlapping" grip first used by Johnnie Laidlay, a grip that was to become known universally as the 'Vardon' grip. He developed phenomenal accuracy by lofting the ball high for a softer landing, and when he took his first Open in 1897 he launched a legend as the 'Greyhound' with knickerbockers and nerves of steel.

Even so he was a modest and private man who kept his feeling bottled up. When he won his first Open he did so after suffering personal grief; and at the height of his fame he was struck down by tuberculosis, the effects remaining with him for much of his life. Some secrets he never revealed – the sadness of a loveless marriage leading to a secret love affair and the birth of a son. Recalling the great golfing performances of Vardon's career, Audrey Howell has written the intimate and touching story of a man of few words, who expressed all his genius with his golf clubs.

**Harry Vardon – The Revealing Story of a Champion Golfer, is published by Stanley Paul, priced £16.99.**

Sand, sand and still more sand. The editorial office seems to be ringing to sounds of 'The Desert Song' these days. Although there are only a handful of golf courses today without sand bunkers (and in the opinion of many none the worse for it) the days are long

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# GREENKEEPER'S LIBRARY

## Wisdom from the 'ultimate storyteller'

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gone when a call to the local gravel merchant will take care of supplies for the adversity of applications on a golf course. Thus the specialist publication issued recently by the STRI and authored by Stephen Baker fills a most important gap in the greenkeepers library, describing as it does in great detail how choice of sand type and quality can be vital in all aspects of turfgrass construction and management. Chapters include data on sources, eg river washed, quarried, sea dredged, sandstone rock, and sand waste from China clay extraction, together with their characterisation and chemical properties. The influence that grain size has on its performance, recommendations for bunkers, top dressing, drainage or blinding, all are examined with great thoroughness and provide the reader with a working manual which will prove indispensable.

**Available from the STRI, the 67 page publication, Sands for Sports Turf Construction and Maintenance is priced at £6.50 post inclusive**

'The Royal Worlingham and Newmarket Golf Club is the finest nine-hole course in the world'. This is the opinion of Lorne Rubenstein, acclaimed Canadian golf writer, player and former caddie; in his magical book 'LINKS'. Lorne is a regular Tour journalist and has played perhaps more of the great courses in the world than any other, for golf is his passion. What separates him from most of his contemporaries however is his belief in the simple basic premise that golf is

better played over natural unspoiled terrain and his turn-off is that which is patently manufactured. Strategic architecture, where a golfer can select from possible routes according to ability, confidence, or courage is this man's meat, and his rich descriptive prose does more for me than any other in painting vivid scenes of places and events that I know I simply must visit. There are no pictures in 'LINKS' and it has no need of them, for Lorne is the ultimate storyteller. In his own words, 'Golf

encourages reverie. To be part of golf is to come upon stories, to become a story, to tell stories'. If there is an award for the best golf book of 1991 this fine work will be a prime contender. I wholeheartedly recommend it.

**Links - An Insider's Tour Through the World of Golf - is published by Stanley Paul at £12.99**

The name of James B Beard is one that is instantly acknowledged wherever turfgrass science and culture is discussed, and no further proof of the man's huge knowledge and great skill at holding an audience spellbound need be sought than that which was witnessed at BIGGA's own seminar held recently at the BTME at Harrogate. Those fortunate in attending Beard's lectures were unanimous in their praise, not only for his ability to make an essentially technical subject entertaining but in his talent for really imparting true knowledge to his students. Under the sponsorship of BIGGA, the complete content of his mammoth two-day presentation is available in book form, categorised in sections under: Turfgrass Growth, Turfgrass Species Descriptions, Soils and Soil Modification, Construction and Turf Establishment and Basic Cultural Practices, ending with a further reading list and biographical notes about the author. For the student it is clearly essential work material and for the practicing greenkeeper a unique opportunity to have at his disposal the transcript of a learning experience which has been termed 'priceless'.

**From BIGGA Headquarters, the ring bound, soft covered 84 page volume entitled - A Manual on Golf Course Construction, Turf Establishment and Cultural Practices - is priced at £22.00 inclusive of postage.**

Despite what might be seen in some circles as condemnation of the practice of installing Sand Greens to USGA Specifications (USGA Spec), the feeling filtering through to us is that many greenkeepers would welcome the chance to at least give them a try. Seen to be successful at such prestige British locations as Collingtree Park in Northampton and East Sussex National, with such greens being openly discussed and seriously analysed at BIGGA's National Education Conference, the availability in Britain of the USGA's booklet on the subject could not have been better timed. Written by members of the USGA Green Section Staff and edited by William H Bengueyfield, the contents are a complete step-by-step guide which take the reader through such stages as subgrading, drainage, gravel and course layering, root zone mixtures, top mix covering, placement, smoothing and firming. The concluding chapter, entitled Tips for Success and Opportunities for Error, will enable those who have experimental nursery areas on their course to at least give the USGA Spec green a fair crack of the whip. To echo Ken Siem's words, 'the transition from soil based greens to those which are sand based is a difficult one ... but practices change and technology races ahead'.

**From BIGGA Headquarters, the 24 page booklet, entitled Specifications for a method of Putting Green Construction, is priced at £2.50 inclusive of postage.**

